## VI. *An Account of a Perſon kill'd by Lightning at* Worceſter, *communicated in a Letter to the Publiſher, by* R. Beard, M. D. R. S. S.

*The following Account was given to a Gentleman at the time the Affair happened; but not knowing whether it deſerv'd your Conſideration, I deferr'd ſending it till you were pleas'd to deſire it.*

*Worceſter, June* 11, 1724.

WE had laſt Night continu'd Lightning in the Eaſt from Eight o' clock to Twelve; the Weather for ſome time before having been very ſultry, the Wind at N. E. and the Barometer at ſettled Fair. This Morning the Mercury ſunk, and the Sky became more Cloudy and Temperate, except a few hot Gleams; at Two in the Afternoon, ſeveral fierce Showers fell, attended with Flaſhes of Lightning and Claps of Thunder, that ſtill approach'd nearer us: Between Two and Three, a Flaſh came ſo violently upon me, ſucceeded ſo very quick by a low, unuſual, dreadful Sound, that I immediately went to the door, fearing ſome Miſchief near. I was ſoon call'd to an Officer's Lady (aged about 18, and breeding) kill'd by it in the adjoyning Street. I found her yet warm, and that ſhe had ſurvived the Stroke for 6 or 7 Minutes. The Fire-Marks they ſhew'd me, were Streaks of a Copper-Colour, branched from the Left Shoulder all-over the *Thorax*, and interſperſed here and there with irregular Spots, which gave occaſion for that Conceit publiſh'd in our News, that

that *curious Plants were drawn on her Boſom, as with the fineſt Pencil.* This ſad Accident happen'd in a Parlour-Window next the Street, that could contain about two Perſons: The Lady, it ſeems, terrified with the repeated Lightning and Thunder, (it having formerly been fatal to her Brother) deſir'd an Officer to change Places with her, that ſhe might be near her Husband; but ſhe was no ſooner ſeated by his ſide, than ſhe inclined ſide-ways, and ſpoke ſome Words; after ſhe was carried to another Room, ſhe ſaid, ſhe was gone, and then, that ſhe was blind, and ask'd for Water. The Husband was thrown along, together with the fortunate Gentleman that had juſt reſign'd his Seat; and a large Looking-Glaſs was lifted off the Hooks. The Landlord's Daughter, at work near the Lady, perceiv'd ſuch an Impulſe on the ſide of her Head, that her Hearing was much impair'd, *and upon every Peal of Thunder ſince ſhe is affected in like manner, tho' not ſo ſtrongly.* The Gentlemen complained, that they were ſtupified, forced down they did not know why, unleſs it were for want of Breath; and of Pains and Numbneſs in their Limbs. They had likewiſe on different Parts of their Bodies ſuch reddiſh Wheals as were ſeen on the Fair Lady's Breaſt: But theſe Symptoms vaniſhed the next Day. The other two Perſons at the further End of the Room were untouch'd; they were all ſenſible of a ſulphurous Smell. The Pane of Glaſs exactly behind the Lady's Waſt, was perforated by a round Hole of an Inch and half Diameter, as if done with a Diamond, or rather a Wind-Gun; but no where thereabouts could I diſcern the leaſt Traces of Fire, or Heat, nor on the Lady's Clothes (having no Stayes on) the Signs of any Violence. On a more nice Examination of the Body, in the Preſence of the Friends, that Evening, I diſcovered on the left Loin, taking in

part of the Spine of the *Os Ilium*, which was ſomewhat ſwoln, a deep Contuſion of the ſame Dimenſion with the Breach in the Glaſs: The Skin was neither indurated, nor pierc'd: The Blood in the Capillaries all round, but chiefly up the Back, ſettled, the Colour of which was eaſily diſtinguiſhed from that of the Streaks, and the circular Impreſſion.

The *Phænomenon*, that cauſed this Misfortune, roſe from the N.E. firſt ſlid off the Gabel-Beam, and the Bricks on the back part of the next Houſe, fill'd a little Court with Flame and Smoke, then turned a Leaden Spout contrary to its former Direction, mounted over the Roof, and, cracking a Stack of Chimneys, dropt down at the Window where the Husband and Wife ſate. Some credible People that ſaw it, to their great Terrour, aſſure me, that it was a Ball of Fire, and that it burſt with the loudeſt Report they ever heard, and then with a hiſſing Noiſe, paſs'd about a Yard from the Ground through an adjacent Street, and rowl'd off to to the S.W. Some Workmen there, and on a neighbouring Hill, obſerved the ſame.

In my Opinion, the Mortality of this Blow may be accounted for from the known Effects of impriſon'd Air only, when ſet at liberty, as the Appearances on the Skin may, from other active Particles hurried along with it at the time of the Exploſion. The *Impetus* being firſt received on the Parts deſcrib'd, occaſioned her Death to be leſs ſudden than uſual in ſuch Caſes.

*Worceſter, June* 4, 1726.

We have had more Lightning and Thunder the Week paſt, than ever has been known in that ſpace of time: And what was more extraordinary, the Continuance of it for 9 or 10 Hours together, with little or no Intermiſſion, and at ſuch a height above us. So far has this been

been from doing any great Damage near us, that in the Opinion of the Country-Farmers, it had very good Effects, eſpecially at the beginning during the Heat: For the little Inſects, that in ſome Places threaten'd the Deſtruction of the Hops and ſome other Plants, fell off like Bees by the Steam of a lighted Match. I know not whether this has been obſerv'd to you before; but I ſaw ſuch remarkable Inſtances of it in certain Situations, that I could not help giving you this ſhort Account of it.

*I am*, &c.

*R. Beard.*